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ABSTRACT

Upward mobility in the field of community college administration is affected by factors such as educational and social preparation, professional experience, the vita or resume, and an individual's preparation for a job opportunity. For most community college presidencies, a doctorate from an accredited, preferably non-experiential, institution is required, and selection committees are always going to look for some academic work in the community college. In terms of social preparation, consciousness of regional differences in values and social mores is important, as are the abilities to chat informally in social situations and to speak before a large group. Professional work experience is probably more important than the doctoral degree, with breadth and variety of experience adding to marketability. Experiences that are valued by search committees include those that demonstrate an ability to deal with personnel, an awareness of fiscal responsibility, an ability to plan and evaluate programs and services, and background in student and program development and community education. Of vital importance in demonstrating these experiences and abilities to the search committee is the vita or resume. It should be brief, clear, concise, and easy to read; it should include major honors, academic experience, association memberships, and significant accomplishments, along with some personal demographics and employment experience. The key to getting an interview for the position is a resume that attracts the attention of the search committee. Before the interview, the applicant should study the position, learning about the outgoing president, reviewing the audits and financial reports of the institution, reading news clippings, looking at the governance structure, and deciding whether he/she really wants the position. (EJV)

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MOVING UP THE ADMINISTRATIVE LADDER

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THE TOPIC TODAY IS MOVING UP THE ADMINISTRATIVE LADDER. SOMEONE ONCE SAID THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO GET TO THE TOP OF AN OAK TREE: ONE WAY IS TO CLIMB IT. THE SECOND IS TO SIT ON AN ACORN AND WAIT. AND THE THIRD IS TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH A BIG BIRD. WHAT I WANT TO DISCUSS TODAY IS THE ONLY SUCCESSFUL WAY I KNOW TO REACH THE TOP OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LADDER AND THAT IS TO CLIMB IT. ALTHOUGH, WE DO HAVE SOME PEOPLE SITTING AROUND WAITING ON AN ACORN, AND OTHERS TRYING TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH A BIG BIRD TO GET TO THE TOP.

RECOGNIZING THAT THE ROAD TO SUCCESS IS ALWAYS UNDER CONSTRUCTION, LET ME TAKE THIS TIME TO PROVIDE SOME TIPS ON CAREER MOBILITY. I'VE BEEN ASKED TO ADDRESS THE ASPECTS OF UPWARD MOBILITY ON THE CAREER LADDER AS THEY RELATE TO EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PREPARATION, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, THE VITA OR RESUME, AN INDIVIDUAL PREPARES FOR A JOB OPPORTUNITY, AND THEN TO THROW IN ANY HINTS AND ADVICE, EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, THAT I CAN THINK OF BASED ON MY 152 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THIS FIELD.

LET'S LOOK FIRST AT EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PREPARATION. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COLLEGE PRESIDENCIES OPEN TODAY AND THE ACADEMIC BACKGROUND OF THE INDIVIDUALS APPLYING FOR THOSE POSITIONS IS A MAJOR DETERMINING FACTOR IN WHETHER OR NOT THEY GET AN INTERVIEW AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY GET THE JOB, MOST OF THESE POSITIONS ARE REQUIRING DOCTORATES FROM ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS. I DON'T NECESSARILY AGREE WITH THAT REQUIREMENT, BUT THAT'S A FACT OF LIFE WE ALL MUST LIVE WITH. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CEO'S THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY THAT ARE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL AND THEY DO NOT HAVE A DOCTORATE. BUT IF YOU WANT TO PAVE THE ROAD AND CLIMB THE RUNGS OF SUCCESS MORE RAPIDLY, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED THE DOCTORAL DEGREE. AND YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT, PREFERABLY, FROM A NON-EXPERIENTIAL

INSTITUTION.

I'M NOT SAYING ANYTHING AGAINST EXPERIENTIAL HIGHER EDUCATION. THOSE INSTITUTIONS HAVE SOME EXCELLENT PROGRAMS, BUT WHEN SOMEONE IS LOOKING AT A RESUME, THEY'RE LOOKING FOR THE MORE TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO AN ACADEMIC CAREER. THE SUBJECT MATTER, I HAVE FOUND, IS NOT TOTALLY RELEVANT. IT DOESN'T MAKE A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFERENCE IF YOUR DOCTORATE IS IN MUSIC, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, BUSINESS, PSYCHOLOGY, ENGINEERING, OR LAW. WELL, MAYBE LAW WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE. IT WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO ME. THE DOCTORATE AS A DEGREE, IS IMPORTANT. THE SUBJECT MATTER RELATING TO THAT DOCTORATE IS NOT. SO THE KEY IS TO GET THE DOCTORAL DEGREE.

OBVIOUSLY, IT WOULD HELP IF YOU HAD, AS PART OF THAT DOCTORAL DEGREE, SOME MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP COURSES. AND IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION, SELECTION COMMITTEES ARE ALWAYS GOING TO LOOK FOR ACADEMIC WORK IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

SOCIAL PREPARATION IS A TOUGH ONE. I REALLY DON'T KNOW QUITE HOW TO ADDRESS THAT. I PERSONALLY HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP THE FINE ABILITY FOR CHIT-CHAT. AND THAT, FOR SOME PEOPLE, IS A NECESSARY INGREDIENT TO SUCCESS. IF I HAVE A WEAKNESS, IT'S IN THAT PARTICULAR AREA. AND I DON'T KNOW QUITE HOW TO IMPROVE ON IT. I TALK TO MY DOG AND MY GOLDFISH AND THEY DON'T TALK BACK AND THAT HELPS A LITTLE BIT, BUT I DO THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO FEEL RELAXED IN A SOCIAL SITUATION. AND HOW YOU WORK ON THAT IS A MATTER RELATED TO YOUR OWN PERSONALITY.

IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT THAT YOU HAVE A SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS FOR THE AREA. THERE ARE DIFFERENT VALUES AND BELIEFS IN THIS COUNTRY, REGION BY REGION. I KNOW THAT VERY WELL HAVING MOVED TO TEXAS FROM OREGON. THERE ARE ALSO TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCES IN VALUES AND SOCIAL MORES AS

THEY RELATE TO THE SIZE OF AN INSTITUTION. SMALL INSTITUTIONS DIFFER FROM LARGE INSTITUTIONS. URBAN INSTITUTIONS DIFFER FROM RURAL INSTITUTIONS. EVEN WITHIN YOUR OWN DISTRICT, FROM TIME TO TIME, YOU'LL FIND COMPETING SOCIAL VALUES. IT WILL BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE AWARE OF THOSE VALUES AND IN SOME WAY DEAL WITH THEM.

OBVIOUSLY, IT'S GOING TO BE IMPORTANT THAT YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO SPEAK BEFORE A LARGE GROUP. I'M A BAD EXAMPLE OF THAT, BUT I SUCCEEDED IN SPITE OF THAT FACT.

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE IS PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE DOCTORAL DEGREE, AND I THINK YOU NEED TO STRIVE FOR A BREADTH AND DEPTH OF EXPERIENCE. SOME PEOPLE HAVE 15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE. OTHER PEOPLE HAVE ONE YEAR OF EXPERIENCE 15 TIMES. I BELIEVE IT HURTS YOUR MOBILITY, HURTS YOUR MARKETABILITY IF YOU REMAIN IN ONE INSTITUTION TOO LONG. THAT'S WHY I'VE HAD 32 JOBS, BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THAT PHILOSOPHY. I THINK REMAINING IN ONE INSTITUTION TOO LONG HURTS YOUR MARKETABILITY, EVEN IF YOU'VE MOVED UP WITHIN THAT INSTITUTION.

THOSE INDIVIDUALS LOOKING FOR NEW APPLICANTS OR CANDIDATES FOR POSITIONS WILL LOOK AT THE VARIETY OF EXPERIENCES YOU'VE HAD, AND IF YOU'VE BEEN IN ONE INSTITUTION FOR 22 YEARS IT WILL NOT PLAY AS WELL AS IF YOU'VE HAD FIVE OR SIX YEARS EXPERIENCE IN FOUR OR FIVE DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS. IF POSSIBLE, TRY TO VARY YOUR EXPERIENCES.

EXPERIENCES THAT PLAY WELL TODAY WITH SEARCH COMMITTEES AND ENHANCE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR APPOINTMENT TO A POSITION INCLUDE EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH PERSONNEL. MANY OF YOU ARE FROM COLLECTIVE BARGAINING STATES AND YOU CAN BE ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TEAMS. IT'S NOT THE MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE YOU'LL EVER COME ACROSS, BUT IT WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH SOME INSIGHT INTO DEALING WITH

PERSONNEL. AND WHEN THAT'S LISTED ON YOUR RESUME, THAT'S A REAL PLUS.

AS MANY COLLEGES ARE LOOKING AT STABILIZATION OR EVEN RETRENCHMENT, EXPERIENCE IN FISCAL MATTERS--PREPARATION OF BUDGETS, ANALYSIS OF BUDGETS, ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS--IS HIGHLY VALUED. YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME AWARENESS OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY. SO GET YOURSELF ON A BUDGET COMMITTEE WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION.

PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT AREA. MASTER-PLANNING IS A BIG THING TODAY. STRATEGIC PLANNING IS A MAJOR FUNCTION OF MOST INSTITUTIONS.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE IS ALSO IMPORTANT. FIVE YEARS AGO THAT WAS PROBABLY NOT AS STRONG A RECOMMENDATION FOR A POSITION AS IT IS TODAY. THERE ARE A LOT OF ACTIVITIES TODAY RELATED TO TESTING--FRESHMAN TESTING, PLACEMENT TESTING, TESTING AT THE JUNIOR LEVEL BEFORE GOING ON TO A SENIOR INSTITUTION, ETC. THERE'S MORE EMPHASIS TODAY ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAN THERE WAS FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AGO. A LOT IS BEING FORCED ON US BY OUR STATE LEGISLATURES. EXPERIENCE IN THOSE AREAS WILL BE HELPFUL AND MARKETABLE AS YOU SEEK ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE TODAY IS PROBABLY A LITTLE LESS IMPORTANT-WHETHER OR NOT YOU'VE DEVELOPED CURRICULA OR NEW PROGRAMS. WE'RE NOT DOING MUCH IN THE AREA OF NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT.

AND FINALLY, EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IS HIGHLY VALUED. EXPERIENCES IN WORKING WITH YOUR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY, WITH FOUNDATIONS, ETC. THESE ARE NEW VISTAS THAT HAVE OPENED UP IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATION IS ALSO IMPORTANT ON BOTH THE STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL. ASIDE FROM LOOKING GOOD ON YOUR RESUME, IT ADDS

A BREADTH AND DEPTH OF EXPERIENCE TO YOUR BACKGROUND. IT ALSO DEVELOPS FOR YOU A NETWORK OF CONTACTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WHOM YOU CAN CALL ON FOR INFORMATION WHEN POSITIONS BECOME AVAILABLE IN THEIR AREA. THE ONLY CAUTION I HAVE REGARDING ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATION IS NOT TO OVER EXTEND YOURSELF. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE 10 OR 12 NATIONAL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS, AND THEY'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING AT HOME. MAKE SURE EVERYTHING AT HOME IS RUNNING SMOOTHLY AND YOU HAVE SUPPORT AT HOME BEFORE YOU GO OUT AND INVOLVE YOURSELF IN NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

A LITTLE ON THE VITA, OR THE RESUME. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENT YOU WILL EVER PREPARE IN YOUR CAREER. AND MOST GIVE IT "LIP SERVICE." THINK ABOUT IT. THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF OBTAINING ANY JOB IS GETTING THE INTERVIEW. THAT'S THE KEY. I HAVE ALWAYS FELT THAT IF I GOT THE INTERVIEW, I WOULD GET THE JOB. THE ODDS WERE IN MY FAVOR. WHEN I SEND IN A RESUME, IT'S THERE WITH 150 OTHER RESUMES COMPETING FOR THE SAME JOB. WHEN I GO FOR THE INTERVIEW, I'M THERE WITH FOUR OR FIVE OTHER PEOPLE COMPETING FOR THE SAME JOB. THE ODDS ARE IN MY FAVOR AT THAT POINT BECAUSE I'M SUCH A DYNAMIC AND CHARISMATIC INDIVIDUAL, AND MY PERSONALITY ALWAYS STANDS OUT. HOW DO YOU GET TO THAT INTERVIEW STAGE? THE KEY IS DEVELOPING A RESUME THAT ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE.

YOUR VITA SHOULD BE AS BRIEF AS POSSIBLE. I'VE KNOW CANDIDATES WHO'VE GOTTEN THROWN OUT OF THE PROCESS BECAUSE OF THE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL THEY SUBMITTED. IT'S EMBARRASSING. IT COMES PARCEL POST, AIR FREIGHT, IT COMES BY DOG TEAM. SEARCH COMMITTEES DON'T HAVE TIME TO READ ALL THAT MATERIAL. THEY DON'T WANT TO READ ALL THAT MATERIAL. THEY DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHO YOUR THIRD HUSBAND WAS, OR WHETHER OR NOT YOU PARTICIPATED IN BOY SCOUTS IN 1942. WHAT YOU NEED

TO DO IS PREPARE A RESUME THAT IS CLEAR AND CONCISE AND AS EASY FOR PEOPLE TO READ AS POSSIBLE. THE RESUME SHOULD PRESENT A BRIEF EMPLOYMENT HISTORY WITH THE MOST RECENT EXPERIENCE FIRST. NOW THAT SOUNDS SIMPLE, BUT I'VE READ A LOT OF RESUMES THAT HAVE TAKEN ME 15 TO 20 MINUTES TO FIND OUT WHERE THESE PEOPLE WERE CURRENTLY WORKING. SCREENING COMMITTEES WILL APPRECIATE BREVITY, CLARITY, AND ORGANIZATION AFTER LOOKING AT 149 OTHER RESUMES THAT DON'T MEET THOSE CRITERIA.

YOUR RESUME SHOULD INCLUDE A BRIEF OUTLINE OF YOUR MAJOR HONORS, YOUR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE, ANY ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS, AND A LIST OF YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS. A LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS ALWAYS HELPFUL. HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN AN ACCREDITATION PROCESS? HAVE YOU SERVED ON AN ACCREDITING TEAM? HAVE YOU DEVELOPED UNIQUE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES? HAVE YOU SERVED ON A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TEAM? HAVE YOU WORKED WITH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY? HAVE YOU GIVEN SPEECHES TO THE COMMUNITY? ALL ARE HELPFUL IN EVALUATING A CANDIDATES QULAIFICATIONS. AND THEN, OF COURSE, THE RESUME SHOULD INCLUDE A BRIEF LIST OF REFERENCES. THE VITA SHOULD BE PROFESSIONALLY DONE. IF THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU'RE GOING TO BE SENDING OUT REPRESENTING YOU, OTHER THAN YOURSELF, YOU OUGHT TO HAVE A PROFESSIONALLY PREPARED VITA, NO MORE THAN THREE OR FOUR PAGES MAXIMUM. IT OUGHT TO OUTLINE SOME PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS ABOUT YOURSELF. I'VE ALWAYS ENCLOSED A PHOTOGRAPH BECAUSE I KNOW THAT ALWAYS MADE A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE WHEN THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A PRESIDENT. (I ALSO HAVE TWO OR THREE PEOPLE SEND LETTERS OF REFERENCE IN ADDITION TO THE REFERENCES NAMED ON THE VITA.) - THIS KEEPS YOU IN MIND BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

NOW, SOME OTHER FREE ADVICE: <u>STUDY THE POSITION BEFORE YOU</u>

APPLY. STUDY IT VERY CAREFULLY. DON'T APPLY FOR ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING. THERE ARE JOBS OUT THERE YOU DON'T WANT. I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT SOME OF THEM PRIVATELY. JUDITH EATON IS GOING TO TELL YOU ABOUT A COUPLE OF THEM, TOO.

INTERVIEW THE COMMITTEE. THE INTERVIEW IS NOT A ONE-WAY PROCESS. IT PROVIDES YOU WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO GAIN INSIGHTS ABOUT THE POSITION. ASK THE BOARD, FOR EXAMPLE, WHAT THEIR MOTIVATION IS FOR SERVING ON THE BOARD. THIS IS A MAJOR DECISION IN YOUR LIFE AND YOU ARE ENTITLED TO SOME ANSWERS TOO.

DON'T NEGOTIATE YOUR CONTRACT BEFORE YOU'RE OFFERED A POSITION. A LOT OF PEOPLE DO THAT. GET THE OFFER FIRST AND THEN NEGOTIATE THE CONTRACT. YOU HAVE MUCH MORE BARGAINING POWER THEN. WHEN YOU KNOW THEY WANT YOU, YOU CAN SIT DOWN AND "TALK TURKEY;" YOU CAN TALK "CONTRACT." DON'T GO IN SAYING, "IN ORDER TO TAKE THIS JOB I'M GOING TO NEED 35, 45, 55 THOUSAND DOLLARS." LET THEM COME TO YOU AND SAY "WE WANT YOU." AND YOU SAY, "FINE, THIS IS WHAT IT'S GOING TO COST YOU..."

KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR PREDECESSOR: WHO ARE YOU SUCCEEDING? DOES THAT PERSON'S STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES COMPLIMENT YOUR OWN? I'M SUCH A NICE GUY, I'VE ALWAYS FOLLOWED AUTOCRATS. I'VE MADE A SUCCESS OF IT.

REVIEW THE AUDITS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS OF THE INSTITUTION. DON'T GO INTO AN INSTITUTION WITHOUT KNOWING ABOUT ITS FINANCIAL STATUS OR STRUCTURE.

REVIEW NEWS CLIPPINGS. MOST COLLEGES HAVE A CLIPPING SERVICE, AND THEY CLIP OUT BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ARTICLES ABOUT THE COLLEGE. NOW, NOT EVERYTHING YOU READ IN THE PRESS IS ACCURATE OR TRUE, BUT IT GIVES YOU SOME FEELING OF THE COMMUNITY SENSE OF THE

INSTITUTION.

LOOK AT THE GOVERNING STRUCTURE OF THE COLLEGE AND THE STATE. UNDERSTAND THE STATE VERSUS LOCAL CONTROL SITUATION. READ BOARD MEETING MINUTES, THEY ALWAYS TELL YOU A LOT. LOOK AT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACTS.

AFTER YOU DO ALL THIS RESEARCH ON THE POSITION, YOU MAY IGNORE ALL THE NEGATIVE TELL-TALE SIGNS BECAUSE YOU WANT THE JOB. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE A PRESIDENT IN THE WORST WAY, THEY'LL TAKE THE PRESIDENCY OF THE DALLAS ZOO IN ORDER TO ATTAIN THAT GOAL.

THE WRONG JOB IN THE WRONG SITUATION CAN TAKE A TREMENDOUS TOLL ON YOU PHYSICALLY, PHILOSOPHICALLY, AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY. IT'S NOT WORTH IT. I'VE SEEN VERY GOOD, DYNAMIC, YOUNG, ENERGETIC PEOPLE, BECAUSE OF A NEGATIVE SITUATION THAT THEY HAD NO CONTROL OVER, (THEY DIDN'T DO THEIR HOMEWORK UP FRONT) TURN VERY CYNICAL, PESSIMISTIC AND NEGATIVE.

AND ONCE YOU OBTAIN THE POSITION, DON'T HANG ON TOO LONG; WE TALKED ABOUT THAT EARLIER. IF YOU'RE THERE FOR FIVE OR SIX YEARS AND YOU CAN SENSE SOME THINGS TAKING PLACE, DON'T HANG ON. PACK YOUR BAGS AND GO ELSEWHERE. I HAD A FRIEND WHO ONCE TOLD ME IN ORDER TO BE A SUCCESSFUL ADMINISTRATOR YOU NEEDED ABOUT $50,000 WORTH OF "GO TO HELL" MONEY. WHAT YOU DO WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH IS PUT YOUR MONEY IN YOUR POCKET AND ISSUE YOUR REFRAIN. MANY OF THESE PEOPLE FALL DOWN THE FIRST TIME, BOUNCE BACK AND GET OTHER PRESIDENCIES. THEY GET OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE SPOTS, BECAUSE FOR SOME EVEN A BAD EXPERIENCE IS BETTER THAN NO EXPERIENCE AT ALL.

THERE WAS AN AD IN A LOCAL NEWSPAPER THAT SAID "TOM CAT LOST. CAT MISSING ONE EAR, BLIND IN ONE EYE, MISSING ONE LEG, WITH NO TAIL, GOES BY NAME OF LUCKY." WITH A LITTLE LUCK IN THE JOB YOU'LL AVOID

MANY OF THE BATTLE SCARS OF SUCCESS.

LET ME CLOSE BY PARAPHRASING ROBERT FROST REGARDING MY PHILOSOPHY IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE: 25% OF THE STAFF WILL LIKE YOU FOR THE RIGHT REASONS, 25% OF THE STAFF WILL LIKE YOU FOR THE WRONG REASONS, 25% OF THE STAFF WILL HATE YOU FOR THE WRONG REASONS, AND 25% OF THE STAFF WILL HATE YOU FOR THE RIGHT REASON. YOU ONLY HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE LAST 25%.

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